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"Strength and Beauty are in His Sanctuary." Ps. xcvi, 6.

✻ St. Thomas' Church ✻

✻ Consecration ✻ Sermon ✻

New York City.

By the Rt. Rev. Wm. Baron Stebens, D.D., LL.D.

THE ALTAR PIECE AT ST. THOMAS'.

COMPLETION OF THE DESIGN BY JOHN LA FARGE—THE NEW PANELS—THE ANGELS BY ST. GAUDENS—ARTISTS VERSUS UPHOLSTERERS.

Easter Sunday found the church of Dr. Morgan beset with crowds of worshippers and sight-seers. It would be inviolable to speculate how many in the press were worshippers and how many sight-seers: at any rate, it may be taken for granted that some were attracted as much by the altar piece of a New York artist, now in the main complete, as by the eloquence of the Rector. St. Thomas' is a rather dark church, built, not for the customary practice of mutual examination on the part of the congregation, but with the intention of carrying the eyes of the worshippers from all parts of the edifice to the chancel in the apse. The galleries are singularly clever in gaining this result. While the body of the church is dark, the chancel is lighter, though far from being brilliantly lighted. If the day is overcast it is necessary to illuminate the chancel by a row of gas-jets concealed from the body of the church, high up inside the arch. Then the gold and arabesque vault of the chancel and the stained-glass windows get the most of the light. A small contingent drops to the lower wall, where the new altar-piece is arranged in a semi-circle, and only a feeble portion reaches the chancel railing and the front pews. There are some important advantages in having the light distributed after this fashion. It adds a fine mysteriousness to the religious services, and it may also assist in the effect produced by the decorations of the wall. It has certainly affected in no small measure the handling of the work by the artist who is responsible for the scene. On the other hand, it may be urged with good reason that the light is far too high up, and while it neglects a little too much the fine work on the chancel wall, brings into strong relief the comparatively inartistic handling of the vault decorations and the stained glass.

Now that the right-hand panels are in position, the whole conception of the altar piece can be gained from any central stand-point in the church. Owing to the deep semi-circular form of the apse, an observer requires to stand well up to the chancel steps, in order to examine everything in this scene, but one can get a general impression from any point back of that spot to the very doorways of the building. That general impression is as follows: One sees a piece of shrine-work by an Italian jeweler of the sixteenth century. But in it stands, or rather is glued, in the centre, a modern cross, severely simple and gilt all over. About the cross are tiers of angels worked out by the young sculptor, St. Gaudens, (of New York,) after a hasty sketch by La Farge. They are adoring the cross in attitudes of devotion which are meant to be neither constrained nor theatrical. Next, to right and left, come two pilasters of black wood, curiously inlaid with mother-of-pearl, with gilding and silvering. These are, as it were, the hinges. The two panels of wax paintings—they look like four—stretch right and left around the sides of the chancel like the painted doors of the shrines usual in the Middle Ages, and, doubtless, still fabricated for the use of the Greek, if not of the Roman Catholic Church. This is what one sees on walking up the central aisle.

The likeness of the whole conception to such a shrine or reliquary will be realized better if the spectator imagine the two pilasters really provided with hinges, and the paintings that oppose each other laid in on actual wooden panels, arranged to fold once upon themselves. Then imagine these decorations of the two sides of the apse wall to close in on each other and swing together across the great central crucifix and the tiers of adoring angels. There you would have a great shrine or reliquary. The angels are thoroughly in the spirit of such a religious decoration. They might have been conceived, although not executed, in Florence, during the ages when Florence was still full of the traditions of the great

The paintings, as before hinted, have been much influenced by the light which they are to receive in the spirit which they are to breathe in such a place as a chancel. The drawing in figures and landscape has been done with boldness and simplicity. There is a certain amount of action in the figures of Christ and Mary Magdalene, which are to the left of the centrepiece, but all the others are more than sober in their action. The angel on the tomb in the panel with Christ is almost too fixed, but the angels appearing to the three women on their way to the tomb, which forms the scene upon the right, as well as the women themselves, are very dignified, yet full of gentleness. La Farge can be powerful or hesitating, apparently much as he chooses, and for the purpose of producing certain effects. As to color, he is without rival, and perhaps it would be as well to treat this whole altar-piece from the stand-point of color alone, instead of venturing into intricate questions of drawing. Everything has been taken into account, or will be before the last stroke is applied. The gold roof of the vault; the colors of the glass windows, which have been modified by the bold expedient of painting them over in part; the frieze that runs under the windows of the apse; the inclined plane that separates the frieze from the pilasters; the gilded frieze with emblems of the apostles underneath; pilasters between the clay angels and paintings; the relations in color between that modeled work and the canvases on either side—these are the questions that are solved or being solved in the decoration of the chancel at St. Thomas'. Only a colorist by nature, soundly trained, could meet them.

It cannot be denied that there is still a lack of perfect harmony among all these parts. The question of gas-light (perhaps the most important) is not yet fixed. The place eventually to be occupied by the row of jets is uncertain. The lines of the panels are not yet in full harmony with those of the modeled work in the centre. The fine composition, whereby the eye starts on the extreme left with the bold figures of soldiers asleep near the tomb, rises to the sitting angel, falls to the Magdalene, and rises again to the Christ, is interrupted at the crucifix. After reaching the other panel with an effort, the eye again travels agreeably over the dignified figures of the two angels, and sweeps on to the faces and figures of the three women, with their expressions (both in faces and figures) of peaceful sadness. So, too, the inclined plane above the pictures, while they give greater value to the colors below, block the pictures off from the general effect, from the *tout ensemble*. It may also be questioned whether the clay work should not be more painted. These, however, are mere questions of detail, which can be nipped at the will of the painter.

It has been said that a certain mysteriousness, or rather an avoidance of violent forms or colors, has been part of the conception of this decoration. Yet the painting, when examined, is of a very clear tone. The colors are rather simply treated, and have, on inspection, a peculiarly fresh appearance. This comes from the employment of wax instead of oil as a medium for carrying the paint. Wax dissolved in turpentine and diluted with refined spirits of turpentine secures a medium which both allows of broad painting and preserves the paint always of the same value in color. With oil the colors change very much after mixture.

The altar-piece is not an order from the congregation of St. Thomas', but a private memorial gift on the part of a member of the church. It is, however, much more than a very fine and subtle work of art in one out of a thousand churches. It may also be hailed as an additional sign that the interior of buildings will no longer be given up to the upholsterer, or the man, by whatever name he call himself, who cannot do work that is individual. There is nothing to prevent an upholsterer from being an artist—if he have it in him. There are many artists who would be mediocre even as upholsterers. But the managers of this piece of decoration have gone to a man who is unquestionably an artist, and they have secured a work of art which will make their church always notable, if not famous. La Farge and St. Gaudens are not the only artists, surely, who are capable of such undertakings, if some encouragement is given them. There are men like Homer Martin, Winslow Homer, and others of the older set, not to speak of the younger men who have been or are studying abroad. There is William Hunt in Boston. Thomas Moran is so skillful that he might do good work, after design, in fresco painting. There is a reality and workmanlike spirit about mural decoration which will do more for American art than 20 rival exhibitions of easel paintings. It not only exercises artists in "staying power," but it makes them work the better, because what they do is done to stay.

A SERMON

Delivered at the Consecration of

St. Thomas' Church,

NEW YORK,

ON WHITSUN-TUESDAY,

May 15th, 1883.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. WM. BACON STEVENS, D.D., LL.D.,

Bishop of Pennsylvania.

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ST. THOMAS' CHURCH.

SERMON.

Ps. xcvi. 6—"Strength and Beauty are in His Sanctuary."

The occasion of writing this Psalm, was the removal of the Ark of the Lord from the House of Obed-Edom, the Gittite, to Jerusalem. "On that day," says the sacred historian, "David delivered first this Psalm, to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren." It is thus linked with one of the most interesting events in Jewish annals. But besides its historic connection, it was also eminently prophetic. The whole Psalm, which contains these words, has ever been regarded as Messianic, and as foreshadowing the future glories of the Messiah's Kingdom, when all the people would give unto the Lord "glory and strength," when all nations would "worship before Him in the Beauty of Holiness."

This declaration of the Psalmist eminently befits this occasion. We gather to consecrate this strong and beautiful house, to the worship of the Triune God. It

is a jubilant day for this Parish ; and should be celebrated with all the grand accessories of holy worship. It is the crowning act of the parochial work of sixty years, and embodies in its celebration, more than half a century of precious and holy memories.

But here a question arises in many minds ; why do we now consecrate a building which has been in use twelve years as a place of worship ? Have not the solemn services of these years already consecrated it, and set it apart for God ? and is not that enough ? What need we more ? To these very natural questions I reply, that notwithstanding its long use, it has hitherto been so encumbered by debt, that it could not be given as a full and free offering to Almighty God. Furthermore, though the religious and sacramental offices which have been celebrated here, have, in one sense, consecrated this building, by reason of their hallowed associations ; yet there was lacking that essential idea of consecration, viz., the formal presentation of it to Almighty God by a specific instrument of donation, through the Chief Minister of this Diocese, and the formal laying of that Bishop's sentence of consecration, on the Lord's Table.

The consecration is a solemn transaction between

God and the Parish, as well as between the Bishop and the Parish. The Parish, through its Vestry and by a legal instrument, making the building over to God through the hands of the Bishop ; and God graciously accepting the gift, and ratifying the transaction, by the Bishop's sentence of consecration, which declares it "separated henceforth from all unhallowed, ordinary and common uses, and dedicated to the sole service of Almighty God." Henceforth, this edifice is no more yours, but God's. Given to him by your corporate and legal act, His Name has been recorded here, His presence will be vouchsafed here, and each one of you as you enter into these courts can say with joyous hearts, "Strength and Beauty are in His Sanctuary."

Strength, is power in action. Beauty, is the assemblage of all graces. The strength and the beauty being connected with God's Sanctuary, must be Divine Strength and Divine Beauty. In what then consists this strength and beauty which so emphasize and make distinctive His Sanctuary ?

If we recall the conversation of our Blessed Lord with His Disciples just before His Ascension, we find that He told them, "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high"—there they were

"to wait for the promise of the Father," even the gift of the Holy Ghost. With this Holy Ghost he told them they should be baptized not many days hence, and that they "should receive power after that the Holy Ghost had come upon them." It may seem strange that men who had been the chosen companions of the Lord for three years, listening to His words, witnessing His works, beholding His life, and specially taught by Him in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, were not already fitted and prepared for their work. But so it was—there was something which they still lacked, that they were to wait for, that they received, when the Holy Ghost came down upon them on the day of Pentecost, and gave them the Baptism which their Lord had promised. Then, they rose up strong in the might of the Holy Ghost—then, they received the unction, which attested their Apostleship, and fitted them to be witnesses for Jesus unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

This, then, was the power with which they were to be endued, this the baptism of the Holy Ghost and with fire, by which the Apostles were specifically anointed for their work; that Pentecostal blessing which the Church has ever since commemorated by its Whitsuntide services.

The "strength" then which is to be found in the Sanctuary, is the power of the Holy Ghost.

This is proved by the work and office of the Holy Ghost in the Church of Christ. To deal at large with this subject, would require many sermons, only a brief synopsis can be given here.

1st. The Word of God, which is to be read and preached here, derives all its power over the heart and life, because inspired by the Holy Ghost. He it is, who makes it quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. Without the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the Bible would be no more effectual in the work of the moral regeneration of the world, than the teachings of Confucius or the ethics of Aristotle.

2d. Christ Himself, as God manifest in the flesh, as the Mediator between God and man—as our Prophet, our Priest, our King, would be unknown to us, except as an historical personage, the founder of a new sect of Philosophers; were it not that it is one of the offices of the Holy Ghost to take of the things of Christ and show them unto men. And as "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost," so can there be no true spiritual understanding of Him, or appreciation of His person and work, unless it is made

known to us by the Holy Ghost. It is in the strength of that Divine Comforter, that we learn to know, to believe, to love, the Lord Jesus Christ, for as Christ Himself says, He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you.

3d. It is also by the influence of the Holy Ghost, that the Sacraments have any spiritual power. Aside from Him, they are only outward and meaningless signs. But in Him, they work with mighty and marvelous effect. The Church, as the body of Christ, is made His mystical body, and becomes a living Church only by the power of the Holy Ghost. He it is who works on the heart of each individual member, and making each believer a living stone, unites and builds up these living stones, until the whole "groweth into an Holy Temple of the Lord," the Habitation of God in the Spirit. It is by the Holy Ghost, that "the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified." It is under His dispensation that the Church is now living and moving. He is its spirit of life, of truth, of holiness, these are its living forces; and so this indwelling of the Spirit is the mighty strength which we see in the Sanctuary. It cannot be too strongly emphasized in this day of secularism on the one hand, and the love of a

sensuous ceremonial on the other, that the true strength of the Church does not lie in its historic continuity with the Apostles' days ; does not lie in its great creeds ; does not lie in its hallowed liturgy ; does not lie in its learned ministry ; does not lie in its Churches and Cathedrals ; it may have all these, and yet like the Apostolic Church of Sardis, have a name to live and yet be dead. Its Apostolic Ministry, may be Apostolic in lineage and not in spirit ; its grand creeds may be but great petrifications of orthodox faith ; its venerable liturgy, may be but the embroidered ceremonies of a corpse ; its beautiful Churches and Basilicas may be but mausoleums of a lifeless worship. What the Church must have, and by which only it can live, is the constant, realized, positive indwelling of the Holy Ghost. All our worship, all our teaching, must be subordinated to this Divine Spirit. We must recognize Him as the Present Paraclete, and Comforter, sent to us by the Ascended Jesus, by and through whose gifts, manifold and diverse, the whole body of the Church is governed, and sanctified.

The vastness of this strength we cannot comprehend until we can weigh, measure, and gauge the moral force necessary to renew, not only a single soul, but the

human race; to break down the kingdom of sin, Satan and death; to build up the kingdom of the Messiah; and thus bring back a revolted world to God.

When we can estimate the power to do all these things; then shall we be able in some measure to understand what is meant by the phrase "Strength is in His Sanctuary!"

But not only is there "Strength" in the Sanctuary for all these outward works, there is special strength there for the necessities which arise in the daily life of the believer.

In the Sanctuary do we learn that the Holy Ghost is the personal comforter of the Christian in every time of trial, sickness or bereavement. In the Sanctuary the strength of God's promises comes out with intense force. In the Sanctuary do we find the strength of Divine Praise, when the swelling voices of the whole congregation ascend as the voice of many waters; and the strength of fervent Prayer, when "all the people" with one mouth breathe the same prayers, which rise as a cloud of incense, from the whole congregation.

Thus I might go on and show that there is no conceivable strength that the soul needs, which is not found in His Sanctuary.

But there is *Beauty* in the Sanctuary, as well as strength, and what is this Beauty ?

When David on one occasion was surrounded by enemies and cut off from access to the tabernacle service, he utters this wish : " One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the *Beauty* of the Lord, and to inquire in His Holy Temple." Here is the recognition of a Beauty in the Temple of God, answering to what he says in the Psalm before as " Strength and Beauty are in His Sanctuary." Beauty is the abstract term, to denote any assemblage of graces, hence it is used in the Bible to signify Holiness, being constantly associated with that word as the human expression of Divine perfection. For Holiness is but another name for wholeness, and signifies that to which nothing can be added, but which blends in itself all moral perfection in its utmost harmony and completeness. Holiness is God's beauty : and when we pray, with David in the Ninetieth Psalm, " Let the Beauty of the Lord, our God, be upon us," we pray, that God may be present with us in His Holiness, and impart to us the blessings which result from that Holiness. So when we say " Strength and Beauty "

are in His Sanctuary, we mean by the term "Beauty" to declare that God's Holiness—the perfection and glory of the Divine Being, are to be seen and enjoyed in His Sanctuary. God's dwelling in Zion, made it, in the Psalmist's words, "the perfection of Beauty." God's being in His Holy Temple made manifest there His Strength and Beauty; and vouchsafing to write His Name on His earthly tabernacles, He hallows every House of Prayer, and causes all devout hearts, to worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness.

In the true worship of God, do we find Beauty in the Sanctuary. Beauty in worship, does not consist in grandeur of service, in ornamental display of dress, in the artistic richness of music; in the massing together of whatever can attract the eye, the ear, or in any sensuous pageant, or bannered procession. But beauty of worship is but another term for conforming to the direction of the Psalmist, "worship the Lord with Holy Worship;" and is but carrying out our Lord's direction, to worship God "in Spirit and in Truth."

Hence, there may be a great display of art and adornment; a great function appealing to the senses only, a choral service which in its sweetness and power of song shall ravish the cultivated taste; a

parade of ostentatious reverences and devotion, without the least spirit of true holiness, or the least spirit of truth. We see all this pomp of worship, and paraphernalia of outward devotion, in the grand worship of heathen temples, and before Pagan deities. We see it in all its gaudy efflorescence and hollowness, in the services of corrupt and corrupting Churches, where show, and display, supplant holiness, and truth. But in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, nothing is true worship, where holiness and truth are wanting. Hence all the accessories of Divine worship should be such as shall cultivate this holiness, and express this truth. Baldness of worship, may be as fatal to true worship as over-richness. The human mind must have some outward representations of spiritual things, by which it gets clearer conceptions of truth, and by which we are taught to raise our thoughts and our affections step by step, as by some Jacob's ladder, from earth to Heaven; but we must use the rounds of the ladder only as a means to ascend to the threshold of Heaven.

Where there is holiness in the hearts of the worshiper, where the truth as it is in Jesus dwells in his soul, there exists beauty of worship, such as God ap-

proves. This gives birth to the highest style of worship, the worship, not of the body without the soul, the stiff ceremonialism of mechanical devotion; but the worship of the soul, subordinating and using the body as its servant and instrument, and turning all the material accessories furnished by architecture, by music, by ornamentation, by variety of services, into means of quickening, and helping the true life of the soul, and thus making our worship not mere meretricious display, or sensuous adornment, but the outgoing of a holy heart to a holy God, and so worshipping Him in the Beauty of Holiness.

Especially is there "Beauty" in the Sanctuary when Christ, "the One altogether lovely," shines out of Zion, itself, "the Perfection of beauty." When He reveals Himself there, in all the fullness of His grace, and in all the freeness of His salvation, then indeed do we sit down under His shadow with great delight, and our hearts, transported with His loveliness, exclaim, "He brought me to His banqueting house, and His banner over me was Love."

Let us now sum up in a few sentences the principal ideas of strength and beauty which are found in the Sanctuary.

Strength, in the strong doctrines, which uphold, like columns, the overarching dome of Divine truth.

Beauty, in the worship of holiness, which is celebrated therein.

Strength, in the Bible, God's majestic voice speaking to us from the Lectern, the Font, and the Table.

Beauty, in the Prayer Book ritual, whereby "the king's daughter all glorious within" is "clothed with raiment of wrought gold" when she enters into the gates of the Lord with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise.

Strength, in the Creeds, those Apostolic and Nicean Anchors which for over fourteen centuries have held the Church, fast to her moorings on Divine truth.

Beauty, in the Psalms, those rhythmic songs which sweep the whole diapason of human joy and woe, and find an echoing chord in every human heart.

Strength, in Baptism wherein is given to the faithful the washing of regeneration, and he enlists as a good soldier under Christ's Banner, in the Sacramental host of God's elect.

Beauty, in Confirmation, when Baptismal vows become translated into a godly life, by the sealing grace and inner working of the Holy Ghost.

Strength, in the Holy Communion, that centre of unity to all Christian hearts; that one table of the Lord's, one family which knits together the elect in one communion and fellowship.

Beauty, in the lives of those communicants, whom the Holy Ghost adorns with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, and so beautifies them with Salvation.

Strength, in the Ministry, the Christ-ordained, and Spirit-anointed power, for the spread of the Gospel.

Beauty, in the glorious results of this ministry, as it turns this sin-cursed earth into a Garden of the Lord.

Strength, in the Faith that is born in the Sanctuary, that Faith which overcomes the world.

Beauty, in the graces of the character that effloresce out of this Faith, and make the life beautiful in the adornments of Christ's own comeliness.

Again I ask, who can measure this Strength? Who can unfold this Beauty? It is the Strength of God brought down to man, it is the Beauty of God revealed to man; and its special sphere and place of manifestation, is His Sanctuary, the Church of the Living God.

So then, these two words, "Strength and Beauty," the correlative terms of Spiritual Power, and Holiness represent the great work of the Holy Ghost in the

Church of God. That is the work which He is to do within these walls. You already have material strength, and beauty, in the substance and solidity of your edifice; and in the ornaments and appointments wherewith it is embellished. It is strong, and it is beautiful, as the work of a human architect. What we want now, is, that the life within these walls, the living stones, may be built up by the Divine Architect, the Holy Ghost, into a living temple; built up, as noiselessly as was the temple of Solomon, when "no sound of axe or hammer or any tool of iron was heard while it was in building," and built up so beautifully that there shall be in the completed character, "no spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing."

We welcome you to-day, then, Rector, Vestry, and Congregation of St. Thomas' Parish, to the strength, and the beauty of this now consecrated and God accepted Church.

Here, you will find every thing that can give strength to heart and life. The strength of will to work for Christ; the strength of nerve to suffer for Christ; the strength of faith to cling to Christ; the strength of love to live for Christ.

We bid you welcome to all that can give Beauty, to your heart and life. The beauty of a consecrated life;

the beauty of a sanctified intellect; the beauty of Christian charity; the beauty of a meek and quiet spirit; the beauty of a daily walk with Jesus; and a daily progress, as children of light, in that pathway of the just which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

I congratulate you Dear Brother on this completed Church. God has spared you, over a quarter of a century, to go in and out before this Parish, in the old Church, and in the new, as their beloved, and now venerated Rector. When you preached your first Sermon within these walls, over twelve years ago, you said: "Please God to hasten that day for the noble consecration office, when the top stone of the tower shall say, it is complete—when every resounding tongue in the belfry shall say it is complete—when every tuneful key in the organ shall say it is complete; when even the Rectory and the cloisters shall unite in the jubilee of thanksgiving over a worthy offering and a finished work." This, your prayer, Dear Brother, has been answered, and to-day the voice of this Consecration service proclaims through all these aisles, and in all these arches, and from turret to corner-stone, "Grace, Grace, unto it."

Nearly sixty years ago, the first Bishop of Pennsylvania, the Venerable Bishop White, laid the corner-

stone of your first edifice at the corner of Broadway and Houston Street in what was then, a rural suburb of the City; and now again, another Bishop of Pennsylvania, preaches the Consecration Sermon, on the completion of this magnificent pile of buildings. But what a change in the Parish, in the state of the Church, in the City, in the nation, is embraced between these two points! Life, growth, expansion, mark each one of these sixty years. Nor will these stop here. The gathered momentum of the past years, will only accelerate still more our advance in the future, and the next three score years will witness changes and growth in Church Life, and Church Work, and Church Power which will far outstrip what has been done between Eighteen hundred and twenty-three and Eighteen hundred and eighty-three.

Solomon closed the prayer with which he dedicated the Temple, with these words: "Now my God, let, I beseech Thee, Thine eyes be open, and Thine ears be attent, unto the prayer that is made in this place. Now therefore arise O Lord God, into Thy resting place, Thou and the Ark of Thy strength. Let Thy Priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness."

Such in spirit is our prayer to-day. Make this House, O Lord God, Thy resting place. Let the Ark of Thy strength, before which Thine enemies were scattered, abide here in the plentitude of spiritual power; the power of Thy holy law, as emblemized in the two tables of stone which were in the Ark—the power of Thy life-sustaining word, as represented by the golden pot of manna—the power of an Apostolic Ministry as typified by Aaron's rod that budded. Let all that this Ark of the Lord represented in type, abide here in fact, and in power. Let the Christian Priesthood which ministers here, like the Levitical Priesthood of the Temple, be clothed with salvation, ever showing forth the sacrificial death of Christ, as well as His perfect life, in all its Divine glory and beauty; and let Thy saints, Thy devout people, who worship here, ever rejoice in God's goodness, and shout aloud His praises in the Beauty of Holiness. Thus shall the services of this House, prepare us for the higher services of the House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and may this edifice prove to many successive generations of worshipers, as they pass in long procession through these courts, none other but the House of God and the very gate of Heaven.





